



MEDICAL ASSOCIATES
C L I N I C

Department of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology
1500 Associates Drive • Dubuque, IA 52002
563-584-4485 or 800-648-6868 (toll-free)

Dust Mite Control Measures

House dust mites are microscopic organisms which do not bite, and are harmful only to people who are allergic to them. They feed on human skin cells.

Dust mite allergens-the most common trigger of allergy and asthma symptoms-are found throughout the house, but thrive in bedding and soft furnishings. Because so much time is spent in the bedroom, it is essential to reduce mite levels there.

Encase mattresses, box springs and pillows in special allergen-proof fabric covers or airtight, zippered plastic covers. Bedding should be washed weekly in hot water (130° F) and dried in a hot dryer. Cover comforters and pillows that can't be regularly washed with allergen-proof covers.

Keep humidity low (<50%) by using a dehumidifier or air conditioning. Wall-to-wall carpeting should be removed as much as possible. Instead, throw rugs may be used if they are regularly washed or dry cleaned. Keep stuffed toys out of the bedroom or wash them weekly in hot water or cooler water with bleach and detergent.

People with allergies should use a vacuum with a HEPA (high-efficiency particulate) filter or a double-layered bag, and wear a dust mask-or ask someone else to vacuum.

Acaricides (dust mite killing agent) may also be helpful.

The use of multiple interventions is encouraged. Duct cleaning and regular dusting have not been shown to offer significant benefit for dust mite allergies.